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ABSTRACT

A community college composition instructor with 32 years of teaching experience designed a semester-long writing assignment (developed at De Anza College (California) and also used at University of California, Berkeley) in which students compose a personal intellectual history. The assignment is based on several assumptions, including: (1) writing tasks that vary audience, purpose, point of view, and tone are most effective; (2) all writers write best what they know best; and (3) publication is the most "natural" way for students to value the conventions of written English. About the second week of the term, students develop a series of lists of five (the five most important people in their lives, etc.) and write one important personal and one important professional goal. Students complete a planning document for their personal intellectual history in the fifth week, and submit a substantial draft (at six pages long) in the seventh week. Students discuss the draft with the instructor and then submit the final 10-page paper (in both hard copy and on diskette) at the beginning of the last week of classes. The papers were "published" as is, which gave students an incentive to take pains with editing. Anecdotal information indicates that this assignment has impacts on many students unlike any other they have done. The fact that the essay becomes so important to most of the students makes the course and the work more important to the instructor. (A variety of samples of students writing from throughout the semester is attached.) (RS)

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Challenging the Freshman Writer: Integrating Process and Product in a Course-long Assignment

John C. Lovas
De Anza College

Introduction

I will present a detailed account of a course-long assignment that I have found particularly effective. I want to spend the bulk of my time explaining the assignment and demonstrating some of the results. But my experience in explaining a particular feature or aspect of a course in isolation has been very unsatisfactory. Though the practice one describes may appear to have some merit, its relationship to other important dimensions of a course or a course sequence is not explained, leaving the listener with many doubts and questions. Though I can't promise to avoid that result, my presentation will include a good deal of written material that I will not present, but which should provide both context and background for what I do present

Context

- Institutional: Freshman English requirements at UC Berkeley establish two semester long, 4 unit, courses in "Reading and Composition," a degree requirement that can be met in 12 different departments. In the English department, the courses are designated English 1A and English 1B. The latter course is the last writing requirement for a baccalaureate degree at UCB. De Anza College offers a three-quarter sequence of 5 unit courses, English 1A, 1B, and 1C as the equivalent of the two UC Berkeley courses.

- Curricular: Freshman English is a baccalaureate requirement in every public college and university in California. Some institutions require only one course, but University of California campuses require one year. Community colleges preparing students for transfer must create equivalent courses as part of the General Education requirements for transfer. In general, each institution specifies the amount and type of reading and writing expected in each course that meets these requirements. A fairly typical statement would be that the course should include extensive expository prose (first course) and fiction, poetry and drama (second course) with at least two book-length works in each course. A series of writing tasks (variously called papers, themes, essays) is specified to total 8-10,000 words. One of the most common forms these courses take is what several students have called "read-a-book, write-a-paper, read-a-book, write-a-paper."

- Course: By state regulation, each California community college must adopt a course outline for each course it offers. This outline

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typically includes catalog copy, a statement of goals or expected outcomes, a listing of topics (scope of material to be included), requirements of students (both in-class and out-of-class), methods of evaluation, and required and recommended texts. These outlines must be approved by a college-wide committee that answers to the Faculty Senate. Approved outlines are the basis for articulating with other colleges and universities. At De Anza College, the catalog description specifies the following for the Freshman English sequence:

English 1A: *The techniques and practice of expository and argumentative writing based on personal experience, critical reading and thinking.*

English 1B: *Further development of the techniques and practice of expository, analytical and argumentative writing, based on critical reading and thinking.*

English 1C: *The techniques and practice of expository and argumentative writing, based on critical analysis of literary expression.*

These descriptions typify what one might find for Freshman English courses throughout California. I suspect they are quite familiar in almost any part of the country, though I haven't verified that.

The assignment reported on here was first developed in an honors section of English 1C, Spring Quarter, 1988, at De Anza. It has been repeated in English 1B at UC, Berkeley, Spring Semester, 1989; in an Honors English 1C at De Anza, Spring, 1990, and Spring, 1991; and in a regular section of English 1C in a six-week summer session at De Anza in 1990.

• Instructor: At De Anza, only fully qualified instructors (M.A. plus teaching experience) are assigned to freshman English. At UC Berkeley, as at most universities, the bulk of these courses are taught by graduate student T.A.'s, most with some experience, but many facing their first teaching assignment.. In my case, I taught my first course in freshman English 32 years ago (as a graduate student T. A.) and have been teaching full-time at Foothill and De Anza Colleges for 27 years. In that time, I would estimate I have taught 125 sections of freshman English. I have served as Assistant Division Chair and as Division Dean (8 years). My doctoral program at Stanford was heavy in the study of language, including psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and anthropological linguistics, all of which have informed my view of teaching college composition. I've also done a summer seminar with Ross Winterowd that emphasized recent composition theory. My early teaching was heavily influenced by the New Criticism I was trained in as an undergraduate. Brooks and Warren and George Orwell and Virginia Woolf (on reading) were powerful early influences. Later, James Sledd and Kenneth Burke and Francis Christensen shaped my teaching of Freshman English. Then Lev Vygotsky and Janet Emig, Erik Eriksen and Roman Jakobson deepened my views of how written language is learned. Pedagogical influences include Jacques Barzun, Arther Trace, Ivan Illich, Mina Shaughnessy, Steve Krashen, Robert

Scholes, and Gerald Graff. Equally powerful, I suspect was my mother who read to me as an infant and talked to me over the kitchen table every day after school. Almost as powerful were the Sisters of St. Joseph who taught me and kept me excited about learning all the way through elementary school. Several Holy Cross brothers made a difference in high school as did several Jesuit priests in college. Perhaps most powerful of all have been the thousands of students enrolled in my courses whose language needs I have tried to understand and respond to.

In no way do I think I can establish the full context for this particular assignment, one that serves as a kind of capstone for the Freshman English course. But it's important that I suggest the rich, complex mix of experience that has led to some of my important assumptions.

Assumptions

1. The repetition model of learning (essentially a behaviorist approach) is not very effective with language in any of its aspects. Thus, the practice of assigning a series of 3-5 page analytic and argumentative papers responding to course readings does not seem particularly effective. This practice probably accounts for a lot of the lassitude observed in students in freshman English courses. Though the topic may change, the assignment seems like the same old thing.

2. The practice of designing writing assignments so that they insure students have done the reading has a cumulative deadening effect. How a writer uses what they have read is very complicated. Modeling the idea that all good writing "proves" that students have read the assignment discourages student writers from developing their own ideas and from shaping their own thinking.

3. Writing tasks that vary audience, purpose, point of view, and tone are more likely to produce confident, competent writers than tasks that make much the same rhetorical demands each time.

4. The selection and sequence of reading tasks in Freshman English should have a rationale of its own, as should the selection and sequence of writing tasks. Some of the reading and writing tasks should be explicitly linked, but some should be kept loose, allowing students to use the reading (or not) as it suits their writing purpose.

5. Writing as evaluation is appropriate for some writing tasks, but other writing tasks should emphasize writing as expression and writing as self-discovery. These are not mutually exclusive categories. The best writing incorporates all of these dimensions.

6. The dichotomy drawn between personal narrative and argumentative prose only makes sense to me in committee and departmental discussions. When I look at good writing, I find it always has a strong sense of the person, some device for distancing the writer from the material, and attention to the conventions of written language (which may include rejecting some of them). Arguing one dimension over the other amounts to arguing which form of weak writing one can most tolerate.

7. All writers write best what they know best. The problem for Freshman English has always been that few students have developed any subject that they know well enough to be confronted with more complex rhetorical problems than those involved in the typical freshman theme. Some institutions address this problem by making the second required composition course an upper division course in the major field.

8. Publication is the most "natural" way for students to value the conventions of written English and to learn how format affects readers.

Just as I cannot possibly specify all the contextual factors operating on this assignment, I am probably not aware of all the important assumptions it is based on. But these should suggest my basic orientation as a composition teacher.

The *Magnum Opus*

This assignment actually begins the first day of the course when I distribute my green sheet (course requirements and expectations). Here's the way the magnum opus is described:

> *Magnum Opus:* Ok, it's a grand title, perhaps even pretentious. But I want you to think grandly here. The goal is this: you are to write a 10-page essay which in some sense will be a personal intellectual history, in which you explain some personal or professional goals with reference to both personal experiences and reading that has significantly shaped that goal≥ I would like you to make this the best essay you have yet written. It should be in the tradition of John Henry Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua (Apology for His Life)* or Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* or Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger of Memory*. Those of you who have read Montaigne's *Essays* have an additional model to draw on. We will work on this essay all quarter long, with a series of deadlines for planning, rough draft, revisions, and final copy. This paper will be submitted on a Macintosh disk as well as in hard copy. My expectation is that we will publish these essays at the end of the term.

Stance

From the start, I establish a stance that this composition course is different. I tell students that they have already completed two courses in freshman English in which they have been taught critical reading and writing techniques. In this final course, they will be asked to use what they have learned. The course reading is eclectic, intended to provoke. The last time I did the course the reading list included Homer's *The Odyssey*, Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*,

Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, a poetry anthology in which we focused on some ballads, a group of sonnets, a group of poems on generational themes, and a group of poems dealing with beliefs, George Bernard Shaw's *St. Joan* and Shakespeare's *Henry V*. Two other kinds of writing tasks are carried on throughout the course: (1) expressive papers--3 to 5 page papers on topics of the students choosing; my only constraint is that each connect in some way to course reading or class discussion; (2) "writing in the service of reading"--various impromptu focused writings, free writings, questions, reading logs, summaries intended to engage students with the reading and the ideas that emerge from discussions. I also ask students to keep a "sentence collection." In a notebook or on a computer file, they are to record sentences that caught their attention, for whatever reason. If they want to add quotations from other sources, that's OK. I review these once, at the end of the course. Throughout all this work, I stress meaning over form and look at form as part of the way meaning is constructed. I go into all of this because I think the credibility I establish with these parts of the course is important in getting students to take the *magnum opus* very seriously.

Invention

About the second or third week of the term, I introduce the first invention exercise for the magnum opus. Students are asked to develop a series of lists of five: 5 most important people in their lives; 5 heroes or heroines; 5 favorite movies; 5 most important books; 5 favorite songs; 5 favorite quotations; and a category of their own creation. My hope was that these lists would reflect each students' beliefs and values, perhaps in ways they were not fully conscious of. I would collect, read, react to, and return the lists. My reactions were of two kinds: (1) to express surprise or delight at some item; (2) to observe connections or contradictions the student might not have considered. Many students thought the exercise was fun, though some of them saw no point to it.

After I return the "lists of five," I ask each student to write one important personal goal and one important professional goal. I couch this task in terms that allow them to avoid deciding on *the* goal in their lives, a question many find paralyzing. In responding to these statements, I acknowledge those who make disclosures, I make connections with some part of the lists of five that seems pertinent, or I suggest further reflection for those with little distinction between personal and professional goals.
In both of these invention exercises, I try very hard not to respond judgmentally.

Planning

About the fifth week of the term (by now one expressive paper has been returned and another is in process), I ask them to complete a planning document for their personal intellectual history. I suggest

they review the original assignment from the green sheet, their lists of five, and their goal statements. I suggest they use any planning device they have found fruitful: lists, clusters, outlines, free writes. Some end up with combinations of techniques. Because the assignment calls for a "personal intellectual history," the planning document usually reflects a greater emphasis on either the personal or the intellectual. Some students focus on critical incidents and important relationships where others focus on influential ideas. My responses to the planning documents usually take two forms: identifying material that seems central to their values and beliefs (when such material is included) and suggesting material that has not been included in the planning document (often suggested by the lists or goals statements). If the planning document is weak on ideas, I ask about those. If it is weak on influences (people, events, reading), I ask about that. The purpose here is to push their thinking further than typically happens in a short paper completed over a one to two week period.

Draft

About the seventh week, I ask for a substantial draft, at least six pages of material. I encourage them to review all their planning material, then to simply write, letting the material take them wherever. I discourage editing at this point. Most students have never done this much pre-writing work over such a long period about a subject they are committed to. As a result, most have no difficulty producing a substantial draft. Those who do have difficulty are the few who have been resisting the process, complying but not engaging and a few who are dealing with material that involves personal risk-taking.

Conference

I read the drafts, now focusing on questions of shape, openings, and closings. Every student then schedules a half-hour conference (usually within one academic week). My experience has been that this conference is the most crucial element of the entire process. By now I have a fairly good handle on the material that each student is working with. Many of them have found significant events, relationships, ideas, readings to use in their papers, but most have not found the focusing idea or organizing device that will turn their material into an essay. During the conference, I tell them what I see in their material, playing the role of a sympathetic editor. As much as possible, I try to show them the shape their draft suggests, pointing to parts of their draft that might serve as an opening. I look for something thematic or an overarching metaphor, either stated or suggested in the material. More than half the students make major transformations in the content and/or organization of their essays after the conference. I encourage, though do not require, another, shorter conference after they have reworked the material of their draft. By now, they also are thinking about their classmates as an audience for their essay. Some see this as a big risk. As one might expect, different students react to the risk differently. Some take great

chances in their drafts and then pull back in their final, published version. Others do not reveal so much in draft and conference, then open up significantly for publication. My recurring theme here is that they are the writer, they are in control, they decide what to write and what to publish. So far, not one student has complained that their published essay was an embarrassment or that they had second thoughts about what they submitted for publication.

Editing and Publication

The paper is ordinarily due at the beginning of the last week of classes. Students must submit both hard copy and a computer disk (or, alternatively, they can leave their file in a designated folder on our computer writing lab network). I have explained several times that we will not have the time or resources to copy edit their final material. Thus, any typos, editing errors, or infelicities of language that they have in their final submission will appear in publication. For the large majority of students, this situation motivates them to take particular pains with editing. But not everyone does and they are published anyway.

Many students exhibit ambivalence about being published (though I emphasize that publication is only within the class). Some have never been "in print" before and it scares them. At the same time, most of these students are intrigued, even excited about the prospect. A few of them get so caught up in this aspect of the project that they volunteer several hours in the computer lab helping to format the files and compile the final manuscript.

The first time I did the project, creating the final manuscript took me 16 hours during finals week, an experience that nearly killed any interest in repeating the assignment. However, I have learned several things that ease this process. The last time I did it, a student volunteer took all the disks and produced the publication copy. All I did was write a short introduction, carry the cover and the manuscript to the print shop, and pick it up the day of the final exam for distribution to the students.

For those interested, I will detail the production process. Since I work on a Macintosh and our lab consists of 39 networked Macintoshes, the computer file must be submitted in a Macintosh format. Students can produce their hard copy on any machine they wish, but they have to translate their file to the Mac format for submission. I explain this several times in advance. The word processing program we use is Microsoft Word 4.0. They can submit a file in any compatible word processor (e.g., MacWrite 5.0). In the latter stages of the term, I solicit student volunteers to work on production: one group to design and create the cover, another to decide on page format, font type and size, title style, and any other finishing touches that are available in our desktop publishing software. Working with two to four volunteers in our lab, I create a master file on one computer while the students convert each file into the specific features of the format we have decided upon. As they complete the

formatting, they transmit the file to my computer. I copy each formatted file into the master file and double check for any glitches in format. Here, I usually add whatever dingbats the format committee has selected for separating one essay from the next. When the entire manuscript is completed, we print a copy, look for widows, orphans, and other layout problems, make the corrections, and print the final version. Working this way, we have completed the entire process in about three hours. I take the manuscript and the finished cover to the print shop (where I have alerted them in advance so I can get a quick turn around) and have 30 to 35 copies printed.

How do we pay for the publication? Our Honors program budget supported the first two. The last one--in the midst of a major budget crisis-- got special funding from our dean's office. The UC Berkeley English department supported that issue. The summer session course had a student who worked graveyard at a nearby Kinko's; he produced that issue overnight at no cost to the students, no questions asked. However, they could be produced at a cost to students of $5 or $6 each.

Results

All of my results are anecdotal. I have not yet systematically surveyed students about their view of the assignment in the light of their later academic experience, though I hope to do that later this year. But the anecdotes suggest this assignment has impacts on many students unlike any other they have done:

• A year after the first group finished, I ran into John M. He told me he had continued work on his essay, that it was now 50 pages long, and, at Christmas, he had printed a version as gifts for friends. [He was short on money, he explained.]

• Mark, a Berkeley student, wrote from his home in Maryland: "Surprise! Well, it's only been a year or so! I was cleaning out my room and found the Magnum Opus. It brought back a lot of memories. I just wanted to tell you that you were one of my best teachers at Cal....I wanted to say how much fun the class you taught was. I learned not only to write in many different formats, but, most importantly, to express myself in a much clearer manner."

• Marianne wrote in her final: "Storytelling, heroines/heroes, self-awareness, and women and men/ sex and gender all meshed together to provoke thought and raise questions about my values and experiences. Writing the magnum opus brought all of these issues to a head and forced me to deal with them, but again, I didn't follow any prescribed rules. Unfortunately, I was not able, as one student was, 'to grasp who I am and what I want in a clearly focused manner.' But, I also do not believe that can be done. I have finished the quarter in confusion and chaos, and have recorded it in the form of my M. Opus. It speaks to who I am today; as at any other time, there would be a

new set or rules created. My voice is clear, but I acknowledge that my voice is always changing. I have spoken, survived, and who knows what I'll say tomorrow."

• The Summer, 1990, class was too short to get the essays printed by the final exam. Twenty of the 28 students showed up a week later at a pizza parlor to get their copy--this was in August! during their vacation! And eight of them were entering universities in September, so they didn't come to score points with me.

• Brett wrote this about the *magnum opus* in his final expressive paper: "Writing it was like a journey through myself, sort of like 'Fantastic Voyage,' but on a cerebral level. I learned a great deal about myself, confronted several of my anxieties; I was startled, shocked, and amazed, a definite must see...My friends were envious: something as creative and unique as the Magnum Opus, while they had written about Cicero and Bronte all semester long only seemed to turn them a deeper shade of green. The essay made this the most worthwhile writing class I have yet had and I hope that you plan to continue with the Magnum Opus."

• Michelle concluded her essay this way: "I choosing to write this paper as I have and about what I have, I have attempted to be truly honest with myself in my writing. I can honestly state that I do have apprehensions in the risk I have taken, I do fear that this paper is not 'right,' an I do worry that other people will not understand or like my work. However, I can also say that these concerns do not really matter. Writing this paper has helped me to take a better look at myself--both my strong points and short comings--and if in doing that it is not good enough for anyone else, that is all right because in time this paper will not make a difference to anyone but me, so I have written this paper for myself."

• A year after completing the course, Nathan wrote in a letter: "My life has not changed greatly since I was a student in your class. The Magnum Opus essay definitely opened my eyes to my unusual lifestyle and personality, but it was the final exam essay that I wrote which enabled me to express my thoughts most clearly. Reading the essays in the collection made me compare myself to each of the writers and criticize my own work. In general, I saw that I was very different from <u>every</u> one of them, which, strangely enough, was what I expected."

• In an end of the course evaluation, a student wrote: "This class made me do some personal introspection that was long overdue. Writing my Magnum Opus has been more of a learning experience for me that it can ever be for anyone who reads it."

To provide a fuller picture of the results, I have appended two final exam essays (written in class) detailing those students' experiences and views of the magnum opus assignment. In addition, I have selected a number of passages from essays (some beginnings, some middles, and some endings) in each collection to suggest the quality of style and clarity of voice that many students achieve in these essays.

Conclusions

1. In a year long Freshman English course, the final term should include a long, rhetorically complex writing task, one that confronts students with problems of focus, proportion, honesty, and audience.

2. Incorporating extensive emphasis on process allows students to get to material they would ordinarily not deal with in conventional 3-5 page papers, written weekly or bi-weekly. At the same time, linking this effort with publication--an emphasis on product--gives real purpose to all the processing.

3. Something about this whole experience engages students in ways I have never experienced in 32 years of teaching Freshman English. The fact that the essay becomes so important to most of the students makes the course and the work more important to me.

4. My age and experience may contribute to the success of this assignment in ways that I cannot assess. I suspect my confidence that this will all turn out well has carried some students through who might otherwise have gotten spooked and dropped the course. I would love to have a young, less experienced colleague try the assignment to see if it translates well.

5. I haven't addressed the institutional difference issue in the paper, but have formed some opinions from my experience. The Berkeley students and De Anza students were equally skilled in reading and writing (or, for the pessimists, equally unskilled). The differences between them lay more in self-perception and attitude: the Berkeley students were generally confident, but, paradoxically, were more resistant to taking risks and experimenting.

If you try this assignment or some variation of it, I would very much like to hear how it works out. Drop a note to me at this address:

English Department
De Anza College
21250 Stevens Creek Boulevard
Cupertino, California 95014

Lists of 5

Edward

5 most important People: Parents, 2 brothers (Roger and Vic)
Friends: Ollie, Dave s, Dave L, Eric (boring list but real

5 heroes/heroines (those that I admire; not necessarily agree with)
King Arthur, Joe Clark (whether or not he's a pompous bastard), Hedda Gabler, Diane Fossey, Dave Small (brilliant programmer who writes softtware for the extremely small Atari computer market including a Macintosh emulator that runs most of Mac software faster than a stock SE)

5 favourite books (very difficult list since I can't recall all the books I enjoy and the books are so different from each other)
Lord of the Rings (I know it's a trilogy but I think of it as a huge volume), Once and Future King, Batman: The Dark Knight Returns (powerful graphic novel by Frank Miller, ASUC text sells it if you're interested), Hedda Gabler, and Red Storm Rising

5 favourite movies (again, very difficult to list since I don't remember all of them and there are so many different categories)
Mississippi Burning, Last Emperor, A Fish called Wanda, Terminator (brainless but good action), and Bull Durham

5 quotes (most difficult to prepare especially without original sources of quotations)
"Whoever says money can't buy happiness doesn't know where to shop."
"...Religion is the opiate of the people." (Marx)
"Goddamned God I'm mad as hell I can't work or talk."
"The trouble with the rat race is that even if you win, you are still a rat."
"A piece of crap is a piece of crap no matter how much icing you put on it." (I heard this somewhere).

5 most sickening p;eople/organizations (not including the obvious hate organizations/groups like Skinheads, Neo-Nazis, KKK)
Tammy Faye Baker/Jim Baker; National Rifle Association; Morton Downey Junior; National Enquirer; Tabloid Shows: Current Affair

Wendy

5 Most Important People: Shang (Dad), Rachel (Mom), Warrin (brother), Nancy (friend), John (friend)

Heroes/Heroines: Abraham Lincoln, Eleanor Roosevelt, Teddy Roosevelt, Audrey Hepburn, Harriet Tubman

5 Movies: Dangerous Liaisons, Blade Runner, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Moderns, Jean de Florette/Manon of the Spring

Quotations:
"No person who is enthusiastic about his work has anything to fear from life." Samuel Goldwyn
"It has been my experience that folks who have no vices have very few virtues." Abraham Lincoln
"There are only 2 ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." Albert Einstein
"Nobody will win the battle of the sexes. There's too much fraternizing with the enemy." Henry Kissinger
"The thing that gives our every move its meaning is always totally unknown to us." Milan Kundera

5 Books: John Knowles, A Separate Peace; Milan Kundera, Unbearable Lightness of Being; Sylvia Plath, The Bell Jar; Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises; F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby.

Favourite Bands/Singers/Performers: Everything But the Girl, Sinead O'Connor, George Winston, Tracy Chapman, Erasure

Nathan

5 Most Influential People: Father, mother, brother, cousin (Mark, friend (John)
My cousin Mark introduced me to gaming and I've done gaming with John for years.

5 Heroes/Heroines: Tris Speaker (baseball player), Stephen Cole (inventor of the SFB game system), Albert Einstein, John Astell (military historian), Sitting Bull (Totanka Yotanka).

5 favourite books: History of the Great War: Order of Battle of Divisions, Mind Cage (A.E. Van Vogt), Church and State (Dave Sim), Foundation (Isaac Asimov), Elric of Melnibone (Michael Moorcock)

5 favourite movies: Platoon, The Quiet Earth, An Unearthly Child, Brainstorm, Apocalypse Now

5 Favourite Quotations:

1."Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player/That struts and frets his hour upon the stage/And then is heard no more. It is a tale/Told by an idiot, Full of sound and fury,/Signifying nothing." --Shakespeare (Macbeth)

2. "Another such victory and I am lost." --Pyrrhus (circa 280 BC)

3. "...and on top of that, Cerebus is hearing things."--the character Cerebus in Church & State, upon his nomination for Pontiff

4. "There must be no regrets, no tears, no anxieties. Just go forward in all your beliefs, and prove to me that I am not forsaken in mine." --William Hartnell as the Doctor

5. "Those who embrace nonviolent civil disobedience, committing breaches of the law on the grounds of conscience, are prepared to suffer violence or punishment themselves rather than inflict violence or injustice on others and share a responsibility for such acts by remaining passive. If, however, the law is so promulgated that it out of necessity makes you an agent of injustice against another, then I say to you--break the law."--Thoreau

5 Chosen (Favourite Games): Europa (WWII Simulation, SFB-FBE (For Future Tactical Starship Combat), Empires in Arms (Napoleonic Era Simulation), TriPlanetary (Modern Space), Warhammer (Fantasy Miniatures).

Sally

5 Important People: 1. Heidi (Mom); 2. Joe (Dad)' 3. Sina (brother); 4. Yassi (aunt); 5. Holly (godchild)

5 Heroes/Heroines: 1. Thomas Jefferson; 2) J. D. Rockefeller; 3) Martin Luther King Jr.; 4. Albert Einstein; 5. Theodore Roosevelt

5 Favourite Books: 1. Gone With the Wind; 2. Of Mice and Men; 3. Return of the Native; 4. Ordinary People; 5. Winnie the Pooh

5 Movies: 1. Rain Man; 2. Jagged Edge; 3. Beverly Hills Cop; 4. Star Wars; 5. Terms of Endearment

5 Quotations

1. "Nothing endures but change." Heraclitus
2. "Do not go gentle into that good night
Rage, Rage against the dying of the light." --Dylan Thomas
3. "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." Eleanor Roosevelt
4. "His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead."--James Joyce
5. "I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to the all."--Ecclesiastes

5 Things That Make Me Feel; Good

1. Buying someone I care about something I know they've been wanting for a long time.
2. Writing an essay and ending it with the perfect sentence.
3. Driving on a freeway on a sunny day in my convertible.
4. Doing a long & difficult calculus problem and seeing that my answer matches the one in the back of the book
5. Standing on my balcony on a warm summer night & watching the lights of San Francisco from across the bay.

Goals Statements

Amy

1. My goal in my private life is to raise my daughter(s) to be well-adjusted and auttonomous.

2. My goal in my professional life is to research behavior (seniale behavior) in the elderly as it relates to brain function and develop a ;method of patterning to help arrest and maybe reverse the process.

Steve

Personal: To overcome charactrer weaknesses, so as to become the best "me" that I can be.

Professional: To become a millionaire. (I'm serious!)

John

Aims

Professional

a degree or two
a career in science
original thought (to know, during at lest one moment in my life--however brief that moment is--a physical relationship or a law of nature no one else has ever known before)

Personal

health
happiness
family
Waimea Bay at 20'+

Carrie

My professional goal is to teach for a few yers and then start my own family counseling business.

My personal goal is to be extremely and endlessly happy.

Here are two accounts of students' views of the magnum opus assignment. Both were written as final exam essays, in-class, in two hours. Beth was a UC Berkeley student (age 18) responding to a question asking her to explain the writing process used for the magnum opus; Andy was a De Anza Honors student (age 19) responding to a more open-ended prompt asking him to demonstrate what he'd learned in the course.

Beth

The first day of spring semester. The very first class of the very first day is English 1B. To tell you the truth, I wouldn't have even considered taking another English class for the rest of myh life (let along take English 1B) if it wasn't required. I've always dreaded English classes. It wasn't so much the class I hated (I've always loved reading discussing texts) but the writing that always comes with it. Writing is probably the most frustrating thing in the world. I can never say hat I want. My thoughts will not come through. I just can't do it.

"My, my, Ms. G., you won't get anywhere with that attitude!"

When I found out on the first day of class that I would have to write 10 pages (yes 10 PAGES!) on my personal intellectual history I thought, "Give me a break! I'm only 18. How much of a history doe I have?" (I know, more bad attitude.) Then I thought, "How the heck am I going to do this? How am I going to explain ;my personal self to a stranger when I can't coherently explain in writing something that doesn't even matter to me?"

Sigh!! (That's how I'm feeling right now, too.)

At this point I just pushed it to the back of my mind. It was only the first day of the whole long semester. (After all, tomorrow is another day--I just saw "Gone With the Wind.") Well, I put it off and put it off...

Every now and then Prof. Lovas would mention the Magnum Opus in class, but I wouldn't really listen. "Yeah, Yeah, whatever. I still have a long time to do this." I made the lists when they were assigned (in about 5 minutes), and I tried to explain the lists when that was assigned (in about six minutes). I didn't put much thought into it though. I guess my "thoughtlessness' showed because the comments I received weren't exactly glowing with praise.

Well, I continued to put off thinking about the whole thing (Magnum Opus. What's that?) After all, the idea of a ten page paper about myself was horrid. Why put myself through the stress when I still have a long time to do it?

"I would like for you to turn in a rough draft next week."

Aaaaaaahhhh!!

What do I write? What do I say? What do I do? (Help!)

Okay, okay, calm down! You can do this. Just think! Now this paper is about me, myself, and I. I'm interesting. I should be able to write thousands of pages about myself (well., maybe not thousands, but a lot), but does HE want to read it.

BIG Sigh!

After about an hour of the above running through my mind, I decided to do some constructive thinking and try to to remember everything you ever said about thought processes towards the Magnum Opus. The first thing I remembered you saying was to just sit down and write because once some thoughts are on the paper your mind can move on to new ones.

"Okay, I can do this."

I sat down with an empty notebook and just scribbled my fingers off. For over four hours and about thirty-five of my large scrawl and incoherent babble, I got out my aggressions towards my brother, friends, and myself.

"I definitely can't turn this in. It's too personal. It's too messy.""

I didn't know what to do with my collection of gripes so I closed it up and shoved it in my desk.

"I don't want to think about this any more. I'm going to get something to eat."

Even though I had shoved the notebook into the back of my desk, the idea of the Magnum Opus must have been jumping around wildly in the back of my mind. The idea just of losing trust to connect the paper hit me out of nowhere when I was at dinner. (Maybe it was because I was sitting across the table from my roommate--now there's a girl who doesn't inspire trust). Then that evening I got into a big argument with my boyfriend because of my lack of trust. (He's very confident with our relationship and wants it to continue for a long time, but our relationship can't develop if I don't completely--or mostly--trust him.) Talking my problems through with him opened up many ideas for the paper (i.e., do I really need to trust someone completely, how has it hurt me, do I want it to change) [The feeling is hard to explain.] It was amazing for me. To be able to tell someone something as intimate as this was scary.

After we finished the conversation, I had all these thoughts and feelings running through me. It would be great if I could express all this!! I sat down at my desk then and began connecting stories using the trust game metaphor.

"Ohhh, I like it!"

After a few pages, I got stuck. I couldn't continue this game image and I felt that I needed to explain more. My feelings weren't coming through.

"I know. I'll talk to teach!"

I got an appointment with "teach" (otherwise known as you) to see what you had to say. you read what I had written and said you liked what I was doing with the game (Yeah! That made me extremely happy because I have never had a teacher say he liked any of my writing form a rough draft), but you thought that I may not be able to carry through the whole paper with the game. I agreed I was stuck. Mr. Lovas next asked me how my lack of trust affected my lie, my motivations, my expectations.

My mind just jumped on the word "expectations." "That's perfect," I thought. "The rest of my paper can explain how the trust issue has formed my expectations of myself and other people. Now all I have to do is get it down on paper. Great. The writing was a painful process. I did a lot of reconsidering about what I actually wanted to write and have other people read. The stuff coming out of me through my pen was very personal. I would write something and then say to myself, "I don't actually feel that way." A few minutes later I realized I did.

Revising was painful also. I just wanted to erase the whole ting and yell, "No! NO! You can't read this!" Instead I did (probably, most likely) water down the personal items a little (a great deal), but the result is still painful for me to read. it was most definitely an eye opening experience in which I learned a lot about myself (more than I have in a long time). Some of it hurt, some of it made me laugh, but all of it made me realize things about myself and other people that have been hidden from my eyes.

(I'm not saying that I would look forward to writing another one. Once was enough.)

Andy

Once upon a time, not a very long time ago indeed, a young human (man or woman is an irrelevancy) set about a quest: a quest to find truth and beauty, understanding, insight, power, good and evil and stratified bureaucracy. In short--the meaning of life.

That this human failed in this particular quest is as unimportant as their gender. For thought this person found not the meaning of life (nor even the meaning of poetry) they discovered that the quest is more important than the quested (as it were), that the journey is more than half the fun. That the meaning of life changes whenever the quest for it takes a turn and that it is therefore forever elusive.

This is the story of that person and their quest that spanned a lifetime and two thousand years in twelve weeks.

It would be fair, at least, to call this an epic class. To travel in time from The Odyssey to "Speaking Parts," from Greece to England to Canada to Germany to France, while each of us personally journeyed through all the real-life events and thoughts and feelings and moments that have made us the living enigmas we are today (some more than others) as asking the highly improbable if not the very difficult. How can I, I thought, stay afloat in such a tumultuous sea of diversity. Then it occurred to me that perhaps ;the point is not to stay afloat. That maybe I only think I must breathe air because I've never tried breathing water. That perhaps to gain a thoroughly new perspective one must lose one's current perspective entirely.

Nope.

Balance is what's needed, and had I attempted alone what I did in class, it is possible there wouldn't have been a lifeguard on duty. The fact that there was a class of other people, individuals all, who were going through the same thing I was was a major comfort, to say the least.

It did make me wonder, though, how Odysseus could get a ship's crew of men to do foolish ;things, or Henry could get a troop of English soldiers to fight a battle outnumbered five to one when we couldn't get nineteen (uppity) college students to agree on the gender of a speaker in a poem. How could Joan stand still and tell a King and an Archbishop that dead saints bring God's word to her head when we had so much trouble telling the experiences and motives that shaped our lives?

Shakespeare told the story of Henry, Shaw that of Joan, Grahame the story of Rat, Mole, etc., Homer that of Odysseus. But Spiegelman told the story of himself, as did Levertov and, I'll bet, Atom Egoyan [director of the Canadian film "Speaking Parts'].

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I told my own story too. I rode the waves of the tossing sea, and when under the surface I petted the star-fish and swam with the dolphins, when above I breathed the air and soaked the sun.

In a classroom, there is a fine line for the student (and, I suspect, the professor) to walk between what the student can and must write, for their own fulfilment, and what they are asked and required to write by the professor. Well this class was different. The nice thing about the standard system is that one only must think about the line upon which one is walking. That advantage was gone in this class. I actually had to think. Excuse me, but that's a hell of a shock to my system.

What did I learn? I learned that writing for writing's sake was okay. Not every page must contain fifty two major plot twists. I learned that poetry, though I've always felt it a purely aesthetic art, can be analyzed thoughtfully and that there is a certain aesthetic beauty to the analysis as well. I learned that I'm a really big flake. I learned that no one person (or character or author) has the answer, except that they (we) all have the answer. We all tell the story.

The discussions in class were no less important than whatever particular work we may or may not have been discussing at a given moment. The author of the work and his (as we read almost nothing by women) characters had their stories to tell. We each had ours. I never had a problem with listening to the opinions of others (with one possible exception!) because every person was telling a story that was entirely their own and I had noting but to learn from the.

This class was about story-telling. But what it taught me about story-telling told me that everything in life is a story. That perhaps life itself is a story we tell by living it every day. And that it is okay to be pretentious as all living hell when talking about a pretentious subject.

The ;quest was mine. The story that of my life. If we take as a given that the nature of a story, a quest for meaning, an epic class, or a life is that it is never finished, that there is no conclusion, then there is nothing wrong with happily every after. Why can't, in the context of the story, everyone be happy. We all have many sorties to tell, but we live the only one there is. the story, that is our life, or lives, is the meaning of life. Maybe that quest wasn't such a failure after all...

"Why," the student asked plaintively, almost afraid of the answer, "aren't there <u>any</u> female characters at *all* in <u>Wind in the Willows</u>?"

Thought for Food

By Ann [redacted]

(H-1)

We are what we eat, some say, but I believe it's more true that we are what we read. I understand that animals instinctively know when something is lacking in their diet and will travel great distances to obtain it. Perhaps, in that sense, we need what we read. I wonder just how nutritious my diet has been?

The very first books I read - even before I began school and "officially" learned to read - were simplified versions of fairy tales. As a young child, I was alone much of the time, with very few opportunities to play with real children, so I used characters in books and in comic books to people my world. I would lie in the hammock in the yard on summer days and be Red Riding Hood, or Cinderella, or the Little Mermaid. Though I was an only child, I had a brother in Hansel and many sisters when I read about the twelve dancing princesses.

As I got older, it no longer was very interesting to be Cinderella, but other characters took her place. Long winter weekends were made warmer and brighter by escaping with Wonder Woman to her homeland of Amazons. What fun it was to soar in her invisible plane and fight evil in Washington, D.C. (Where are you now, Wonder Woman?) I remember reading a series of books about a young woman named Deanna who was pretty, popular and always up to her elbows in mystery and trouble - all of which she unraveled and solved to everyone's pleasure. Deanna must have been another version of Nancy Drew and I loved her and wanted to be just like her.

The Son Breaks Through the Fog

by

Jason [redacted] (SS)

"The lawn mower won't start dad. I can't mow the lawns if I can't even start the mower!"

That's what you said last week, Jason. When I went out to give it a try it started right up."

"I know Dad, but this time it really will not start. I've been pulling on the darn cord for nearly fifteen minutes now. Come out and try it for yourself."

Unhappily, my father pounced out of his chair, walked up to the lawn mower, pushed it out to the lawn, and then attempted to start it. It was obvious that he thought I was merely trying to make excuses in order to escape my duty of mowing the lawns. He anxiously yanked on the cord with all of his might, increasing his arm speed with each attempt. My father continued to do so for some time, until finally he stopped for a breath. There was no talking to him. If someone tried he would have pounced on them like a cat on a mouse. After a long twenty second break, my Dad tried to start the mower again. He continued pulling on the cord even though it was clear that the only logical thing to do was for him to stop his efforts. Finally my father blew up on his two-hundredth pull exclaiming, "God damn son of a bitch! God damn son of a bitch! God damn son of a bitch!" While he was getting his words in, he lofted the grass catcher across the pool, tumbled the lawn mower across the lawn, and finally kicked the trash can as hard as he could. This was a time when I made sure that I stayed out of the way of both him and the objects flying through the air.

My father, Robert [redacted], is the one male figure that I truly respect and look up to in the entire world. Men like George Patton, Bo Jackson, "Gorby" and John F. Kennedy are all great heroes, but in my heart my father stands above them all. He is a man that has struggled through poverty, fought in a war, and succeeded in raising a beautiful family. He has seen good times and bad times and has certainly paid his dues. He is the one man in the world that has most definitely the greatest influence on me emotionally, with respect to personal goals, and with respect to professional goals. The reader may wonder if this is the same man that threw the lawn mower across the yard or not, but I can assure you it is. The incident that I described above is only a demonstration of one of the emotional characteristics that my father possesses: a temper. The reason that I chose to write about this characteristic is because my past has proven that I, too, deal with frustrating experiences in the same way. I also feel rage and act accordingly when trying to drown out the fire of my frustrations.

Andrew [redacted]
(H-3)

Ice T Vs. Jane's Addiction

Ya know something, stereotypes really piss me off. I know I've harped about them before, but I'm going to harp about them again. I mean, what the hell kind of world do we live in where people are judged so often by the way they look? People almost don't even bother to get to know each other anymore because judgement about a person is made so often on just appearance. I don't know...It just seems as if so many people (and I can't disclude myself) cut so much of the world out, placing huge emphasis on the infamous "FIRST IMPRESSION," without giving room for a second or third, possibly wiser, impression. I guess stereotypes just upset me because they're something I've always had to deal with, and I'm kind of sick of it.

> "My sister and her boyfriend slept in a park. They had to leave home 'cause he was dark."
>
> Jane's Addiction

Stereotypes promote and give birth to man's greatest sin, which, in my opinion, is racism. I've racked my brain trying to think of something that bugs me more about the world that racism, but I came up with nothing. I mean, what could be more stupid and idiotic than to hate someone because of the color of his or her skin? Jesus, even as I write this my gut starts to do somersaults because it makes me so angry.

I spent most of my growing up years before high school in San Francisco, and I experienced lots of things that I never would have experienced here had I lived here all my life. One of the biggest and most impacting aspects of living in San Francisco were the cultural differences between people. My family was one of the only white families on the block, and in my school whites were also a minority. Many of my best friends were Asian or black, so I became familiar and comfortable with many of the differences between my culture and theirs. I ate tons of Chinese and Philippine food, which are my favorite foods today, and I was exposed to much of the soul and R+B from the seventies and early eighties, music and songs that I still remember fondly, though long forgotten or even unknown by most of my friends here. These "foreign" things became normal to me and are still big part of me today.

THE MAGNUS OPIUM

by
Dino [redacted] (SS)

I held my breath. Her eyes started to fill with tears. She bent forward towards me as if to lock in my attention as she said, "Mom, you know, this AIDS thing has been on my mind a lot lately. I am really frightened by it. I think I'll get tested because I was thinking 'what if I have it and don't even know it?'

This whopper squeezed the breath out of my throat and tears from eyes as I replied, "Well, of course, if you're worried, and we all know how you inherited those worry genes from your grandpa, so you can't help but worry, ...so get tested and then you'll feel more at peace (because I could only think she'd test out okay), and then of course, just be very, very careful." My voice ran on as I wanted to both annihilate and get past the nightmarish prospect of my daughter having AIDS, as fast as possible. I went on about the statistics and probabilities I had heard of women getting AIDS in order to diminish the ugly fear, but I knew I wanted to be doing so much more. If there was a test lab close by and open at this late hour I would have walked her there right on the spot. I didn't want her to worry, and I didn't want to worry.

I tend to worry. It is a trait that is outstanding in some of our family members. I have an aunt whose face is carved with worry lines and who may be able to claim the title of World Champion Worrier since that is how she spends her every waking minute. She has worried about every conceivable harm and ill event that could have even remotely happened to her and her loved ones. During family gatherings I couldn't understand how she could be enjoying herself when her vision of the world did not allow her to relax and feel safe for even a minute. I have always tried to avoid her way of facing life by acknowledging that I have this tendency towards being a "worry-wart" too. I am always on the lookout for the symptoms, and I take action to prevent it or at least avoid it's full-blown paralyzing effect. Because that is what a worry-wart is; just a lump that sits there not doing anything.

Middles

Even now, I find certain situations unacceptable and refuse to cooperate. At the supermarket where I work there's a rule that employees must retain receipts for all items bought in the store while on duty. Once, while I was on a break innocently trying to eat several donuts and a large banana all within a ridiculously short period of time, a "higher up" walked in and asked me to produce my receipt. I told him I didn't have one (which wasn't true, it was in my pocket) and curtly volunteered to go to jail, whereupon I was given a long lecture on my attitude and the importance of rules, "because, if we didn't have rules..."--and all that garbage about the lowest common denominator, yak, yak, yak. It seems to me that if they trust me to do my job as prescribed, with all its various responsibilities, including the handling of thousands of dollars worth of merchandise daily, then they can trust me not to steal a few donuts behind their goddamn backs. I then reminded this guy of the relative nonimportance of my job to me and that he might find it necessary to speak to the manager about my immediate reprobation. He never did.

Another time, I checked a book out of the public library and noticed that it was due on a holiday during non-library hours, on Labor Day. So that afternoon I drove to the library, intending to use the outside book depository, except that when I got there the bin was completely full, with books literally stuffed in sideways and hanging halfway out the door. Well, I wasn't going to leave *my* book there for somebody to steal. So I waited until Monday and delivered it in person to the kindly lady at the checkout stand. Inevitably, came the declaration, "This is overdue, sir." I explained the situation to her and expected a full reprieve. Instead, I got the same damn answer, no sympathy, no qualifiers, nothing. Well, I wasn't looking for *sympathy*, of course. I argued the point with her in front of a growing line of book addicts, but got nowhere. She even threatened to revoke my "privileges." I couldn't believe it! My brain reels at this sort of thing. How, I ask you, in a world of coldness and rationality, can something like this happen? "Fine, lovely," I said. "I'll write you a check." "We don't take checks," she said, coldly. "I know that," I said. "But if I can compromise, surely *you* can compromise also, huh?" Even as I said that I had my checkbook out and was writing (I borrowed one of her lousy blunt pencils). And then I gave her the check: "*Pay to the order of* -- Shasta County Library. *Sum*--Five Fucking Cents."

— JOHN (H-1)

Who am I? That's easy. I'm Danna [redacted]. What am I? Hmm. Let me think a moment . . . I am a Chinese-American, but I would prefer to drop the Chinese part because I AM AN AMERICAN. I was born and raised in the bay area and speak English. I eat hamburgers and French Fries. Heck! I don't even really like Chinese food much. The truth is -- and perhaps somewhat sadly -- I don't like being Oriental, and I'm not even sure why.

I'm sort of caught up in an identity crisis, and my interest in racism makes matters worse. Here's the problem: I don't want to be any part of the stereotype of the typical Oriental person -- you know, the bad driver, slanty-eyed, bucked teeth scenario. In fact, I do my best to feel dissociated from the stereotype by making fun of it. Just this year, I found myself getting on the case of the "typical Oriental person" even more. When I'm driving along in my car and see someone driving weird (too slow or with the blinker on a block ahead of time), I always tend to get impatient, pass the person up, and check to see what he/she looks like. It could be anybody: an old person, someone on drugs, OR and Oriental person. Most of the time, it's one of them Oriental people. I pass by and, laughing, sarcastically say, "Figures!". The stupid thing is, I'm one of "them people." I tell myself that people probably say the same thing about the way I drive -- they probably pass by, look in the window, and think I'm a typical oriental driver. This ticks me off! It's a no-win situation. I can try not to be "one of them" but, the fact is, I am -- God forbid.

Being Chinese makes me feel uncomfortable; there are times when I cannot tolerate it. Sometimes I'm embarrassed to say it because one ought to be proud of his heritage -- maybe in time I will take pride in being a Chinese-American, but not yet. I don't even know what I truly am. I may look Oriental outside, but sometimes I really wonder what is on the inside. (Outside appearances do not amount to much; it is what is inside that really counts.) Don't flip now, but maybe I'm really. . . Black. Who would ever know but me? But I don't even really know. Because I am so interested in the Civil Rights Movement and racial equality, I feel like I can identify with Blacks. The secret of my true identity may lie in one word: Ethnicity. If ethnicity is the race, culture, and nationality that one identifies with, maybe I am Black. —DANNA (SS)

Middles

Vonnegut represents the first author whose Ideas and opinions I found I could apply to my life. Maybe it was just the time that I began reading his work; I was younger, fresh for ideas. I think that deep inside of me there was something lying hungry, some contemplative part of me, starving for insight. This is where Vonnegut came in. His message and meaning was just what was needed to satiate my mind.

I must have been about fourteen at the time, dealing the best I could with the insecurities and peer-minded idiocy of the high-school freshman experience. I was reading some, mostly fantasy and science fiction, the works of Tolkein, Asimov, Heinlein. But I was becoming tired of the form-written plots and cliche themes that often accompanied this sort of fiction. These gave me only glimpses into the great potential that reading (and writing) held in the form of works such as Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*. I knew that there was a great deal to be learned, but to me science fiction and fantasy works often seemed to lose their deeper meaning--drown it in forced creativity. So I escaped to Vonnegut.

I first read *Slaughterhouse Five* on the advice of my mother. She remarked that it was Vonnegut's classic, his most Famous. So I read it, not knowing what to expect. (At that time Kurt Vonnegut was just another name sitting reclusively, collecting dust on my Mother's bookshelf). Reading this book really opened my eyes. It had everything, imagination, humor, and newest to me, insight. I read more: *Cat's Cradle* (my personal favorite), *Mother Night*, *Galapagos*, etcetera. These works made serious statements. They presented Vonnegut's opinions and passions while still retaining the fantastical zeal that had drawn me to reading in the first place.

From such themes as the semi-historical anti-war helplessness of *Slaughterhouse Five* to the seriously minded religious satire of *Cat's Cradle*, I began to formulate my own ideas. These works forced me to re-evaluate my own opinions regarding everything from War and the apocalypse to religion and the apocalypse (Vonnegut is rather apocalyptic, to say the least). I was finally dealing with the world's real issues, with philosophy shaping ideals, and finally free of the amorality of childhood reading. It was still fiction, but it was made real, applicable. These works ignited a passion for thought that burned away the doldrums of my earlier reading and shocked me into recognizing my own intellectualism.

Matt (UCB)

But protect us for how long? When is my life mine? "Live up to our standards," he says. But if their standards are not mine, their thinking not mine, how am I supposed to live my life without living theirs first?

Growing up I have learned not to fight them anymore. I have learned they can never change. And no matter how many value speeches, or lectures, or arguments they give I will never change. I stayed home an extra two years and attended De Anza College because I wasn't ready to leave their shell. Even though I disagree with most of the values inside that shell, I would rather stay and grit my teeth than go out into a wild unknown world. But at twenty years old I am ready to try to live my own life. I am anxious to find who I am without any more parental influences.

During other months of May my parents have helped cultivate my garden of life. Some flowers in that garden are theirs and always will be. But I have to see if I can grow my own flowers on my own. Am I capable of a green thumb without parental crutches? Because only then will the perfect flowers I have cultivated really belong to me. When my sister called to tell me where I will be living next year I was ecstatic. All the years of struggle with my parents for freedom and independence will finally end. In that phone call my sister handed me the seed of the flower I am to plant all by myself.

"Nothing in the world is single..." Shelley says in "Love's Philosophy". I longed for independence from my parents as much as I longed for the dependence of love. For as long as I can remember there has always been that empty space inside of me like the void space in the jigsaw puzzle no piece can fit. My flowers of love were fantasy flowers growing from dreams, and books like Princess Daisy, Romeo and Juliet. I would watch movies like "A Room with a View" and feel the space inside of me ache and grow bigger with longing to be filled.

– Cynthia (H-2)

Endings

I've heard of a quote that goes, "What we desire our children to become, we must endeavor to be before them." I don't remember who said it, but it's especially applicable in my case. I believe that my father has achieved accomplishments that I could never come close to. Perhaps this is the source of my guilt. Asian parents can be particularly brutal. If you come home with a 95% on a paper, they'll ask, why not 100%? If you're salutatorian and vice-president of the class, they'll ask, why aren't you valedictorian and president? The list goes on...

When my father came with me to CAL in August he took me out to dinner in San Francisco. Sitting across from him at the wharf, with his grey hairs and tired eyes, I suddenly felt responsible for his appearance. He's around fifty-two now, and he's become more introspective in recent years. Even more so retrospective. He has a corny sense of humor that I haven't heard since I was thirteen. It's been replaced by an exceedingly serious concern for my future. For just about all my teenage years all we've discussed have been plans for possible majors, prospective fields, the usual conversation. Now, back at the table, the topic turned to the old source of friction--doing well at school.

He told me, "The family is like a hand. Cut off one finger and the whole hand hurts. No matter what you do, Wendy, the family will always be there. But you must do it for yourself, not for me or your mother. Otherwise it means nothing."

I think of these words and the guilt washes over me again. It's no use lingering though. I feel, more than ever, closer to my family--despite the forces that are pulling me away. Once I am finally sucked out of the eggshell (and oozing in the sink), I'll never be able to forget the precarious commitment it took to create it.

— Wendy (UCB)

Alongside making my Gone with the Wind, my Dr. Zhivago, I want to open a cafe or a tiny bistro on the French or Italian Riviera, on Maui, in Los Angeles, or in San Francisco. I want to create a place with such gastronomic delights that people from around the globe will travel vast distances to sample my cuisine. The atmosphere would be casual and relaxed, white pine, large exspanses of glass, a restaurant that was California to the hilt, and the food divine and god-like. My creation would not be your sun-dried tomatoes, goat cheese, crabcakes, Napa Valley white Zinfandel type, but one so unique, so distinctive that I cannot begin to fathom the scale of the gastronomy that would grace my tables. After a taxing day in the kitchen, I, producer, director, and gourmet, will set off in my sailboat, wife, kids, and Airedale in tow as we shoot out across a sapphire sea with a giant flaming orb falling beneath the horizon in a cognac sky. That, to me would be perfect. A perfect life, one of sapphire seas and cognac skies.

FINI Brett (UCB)

I try to imagine what our relationship will be like ten years from now, or even fifty. Will she really get married in a red dress and make me wear black (a color that I look atrocious in)? Can we possibly be friends when she lives in Colorado and I'm out country-hopping from New York to Europe? When we're doddering old-farts will she still be able to do battle with my screaming rhubarbs? Will I still have screaming rhubarbs?

I have this vision of us when we're sixty. I am visiting at her ranch house in Colorado. She is wearing a pair of worn jeans, her grandchildren screaming like banshees in the backyard. We sit astutely "chatting" over tea like mature woman. I'm wearing something subtle yet stylish, not overdressed for the occasion. Our husbands are outside shooting the breeze while walking the length of the 100-acre ranch. Hers is wearing worn boots and looking as if he just stepped out of the Australian outback. Mine is daintily picking his way through the horse piles worrying about his Italian leather loafers and Gucci knee-highs. We dig through the old photo albums, reminisce about our youth, laugh at our gray hair, and trade stories of our adulthood. The children are playing. The men are busy with their male bonding. And we sneak off upstairs to swap raucous rhubarb stories and giggle about our sex lives. . .

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Carrie (H-1)

In choosing to write this paper as I have and about what I have, I have attempted to be truly honest with myself in my writing. I can honestly state that I do have apprehensions in the risk I have taken, I do fear that this paper is not "right", and I do worry that other people will not understand or like my work. However, I can also say that these concerns do not really matter. Writing this paper has helped me to take a better look at myself - both my strong points and short comings - and if in doing that it is not good enough for anyone else, that is all right because in time this paper will not make a difference to anyone but me, so I have written this paper for myself.

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Michelle (UCB)

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Endings

In trying to attain this self knowledge, I analyze. I analyze everything. Everything from why I procrastinate to why I become annoyed when people hum. And every once in a while I analyze why I should even bother with anything. I give way to the question that is always there always brooding over me, waiting for me to notice it, acknowledge it. It's the same question that everyone from Monty Python in *The Meaning of Life* to William Wordsworth in "Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" have addressed. The meaning of life. I call it the Why. Why do we bother? Why is it important? Why does it matter? When I found out that my mother had cancer, the answer to this why seemed nonexistent. Why, I asked myself, did she bother? What did it all come to? Did it matter? Why should I go to school, to learn, to earn a degree, to find a career that I enjoyed, to get married, to have a family? What did it matter in the end?

It was at this point that I needed a religion. A religion, any religion, provides you with these answers. It is all written down and understood by everyone who believes in it--Why. But I was not religious; I could not take these 'why' answers to heart.

It was Christmas time and my mother was no longer at the hospital. There was nothing else they could do, except to continue giving her drugs to minimize the pain. My brother, and two sisters, and my aunt were there at my mother's house. She wanted us to prepare Christmas dinner, and she knew exactly what she wanted us to have. So, according to her instructions, we made it: the goose and the honey-baked ham; the special stuffing that was my grandmother's recipe; the potatoes; the salads--everything. And while on the surface this was merely the preparation of a meal, it seemed that underneath, our motions has been transformed into those of some ritual. I knew that my mother could hear the laughing and talking and the clanging and banging of our preparation from her bedroom upstairs, and I knew she was smiling, with her eyes closed.

And when the meal was ready and presented just as she had asked we went to get her. She had to be carried down the stairs-- she was so weak. She hadn't been downstairs in three weeks. So my brother and my mother's nurse carried her down, and set her at the head of the table. And she looked at it and we knew it was perfect. And she cried. And then she looked at us, one at a time, intensely, lovingly. And when she looked at me, I saw the Why. This, she seemed to say, is why. And though she looked at me for just a moment, it felt like forever. Because for that moment, I had my answer. I had it, and it was glorious and satisfying and wonderful.

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Sarah (H-1)

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i was reading something the other day about evolution. i'm not sure what the publication was or even the exact content of the article itself. However something about the author's claims struck me. S/he was writing about human evolution as if we had reached its pinnacle. As if to say that if we have advanced to the point of being able to write articles in science magazines about ourselves, then we had obviously gone all the way. What's left for an encore? i've thought a lot about that article in writing this paper. i feel like i am saying much the same thing--if i have developed so far intellectually so as to be able to write a paper about my development for a college class, then i have reached the pinnacle of my intellectual evolution, my life from here will be a stagnating pool of festering mediocrity lost in a vast wasteland of pedantry and ordinary-ness. i would like to think that even if this is the final act, i have something left for an encore or two. i would like to think of myself as a work in progress.

i am terribly frightened to end this paper...

❦ ❦ ❦

Andy (H-3)

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